

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A turbine comprising:  
  
an oil deflector including at least one set of seal rings; and  
  
a shaft including at least one stage for holding a bucket and an annular step, the step having a circumferential surface in proximity to the seal rings and a side surface extending radially from a central portion of the shaft and defining a groove positioned radially underneath the circumferential surface, and the step projecting axially toward the at least one stage.
  
2. (original) A turbine according to claim 1, wherein the step further includes another side surface extending radially from the central portion of the shaft, the groove extending axially toward the another side surface.
  
3. (original) A turbine according to claim 2, wherein the shaft comprises an intermediate pressure rotary shaft.
  
4. (currently amended) A turbine comprising:  
  
an oil deflector including at least one set of seal rings; and  
  
a shaft including an annular step, the step having a circumferential surface in proximity to the seal rings, a side surface extending radially from a central portion of the shaft and defining a groove positioned radially underneath the circumferential surface,

~~and A turbine according to claim 1, wherein the shaft further includes a thrust bearing enclosure which extends radially from the central portion of the shaft, the step projecting axially away from the thrust bearing enclosure.~~

5. (original) A turbine according to claim 4, wherein the shaft comprises a high pressure rotary shaft.

6. (original) A turbine according to claim 1, wherein the circumferential surface of the step defines an oil slinger pocket.

7. (currently amended) A rotary shaft of a turbine, the rotary shaft comprising:

an axially extending central portion; ~~and~~

at least one stage for holding a bucket; and

an annular step projecting radially from the central portion, the step having a circumferential surface and a radially extending side surface, the side surface defining a groove positioned radially underneath the circumferential surface, and the step projecting axially toward the at least one stage.

8. (original) A rotary shaft according to claim 7, wherein the step further includes another side surface extending radially from the central portion of the shaft, the groove extending axially toward the another side surface.

9. (original) A rotary shaft according to claim 8, wherein the shaft comprises an intermediate pressure rotary shaft.

10. (currently amended) A rotary shaft of a turbine, the rotary shaft comprising:  
an axially extending central portion; and  
an annular step projecting radially from the central portion, the step having a circumferential surface and a radially extending side surface, the side surface defining a groove positioned radially underneath the circumferential surface; and

~~A rotary shaft according to claim 7, wherein the shaft further includes a thrust bearing enclosure extending radially from the central portion of the shaft, the step projecting axially away from the thrust bearing enclosure.~~

11. (original) A rotary shaft according to claim 10, wherein the shaft comprises a high pressure rotary shaft.

12. (original) A rotary shaft according to claim 7, wherein the circumferential surface of the step defines an oil slinger pocket.

13. (currently amended) A turbine comprising:  
a first oil deflector including at least one set of seal rings;  
a second oil deflector including at least one set of seal rings; and  
a shaft including:

a first annular step having a circumferential surface in proximity to the seal rings of the first oil deflector; and

a second annular step having a circumferential surface in proximity to the seal rings of the second oil deflector;

wherein the first and second annular steps project in axially opposite directions.

14. (original) A turbine according to claim 13, wherein the first annular step includes a radially extending side surface which defines a groove positioned radially underneath the circumferential surface of the first annular step, and the second annular step includes a radially extending side surface which defines a groove positioned radially underneath the circumferential surface of the second annular step.

15. (original) A turbine according to claim 14, wherein the first annular step further includes another radially extending side surface, the groove positioned underneath the circumferential surface of the first annular step extending axially toward the another side surface.

16. (original) A turbine according to claim 14, wherein the shaft further includes a thrust bearing enclosure extending radially from a central portion of the shaft, the second annular step projecting axially away from the thrust bearing enclosure.

17. (original) A turbine according to claim 15, wherein the shaft further includes a thrust bearing enclosure extending radially from a central portion of the shaft, the second annular step projecting axially away from the thrust bearing enclosure.

18. (original) A turbine according to claim 13, wherein at least one of the first and second annular steps includes a radially extending side surface which defines a groove positioned radially underneath the circumferential surface of the at least one first and second annular steps.

19. (new) A turbine according to claim 1, wherein the annular step, including its circumferential surface and its side surface, is an integral portion of the shaft.

20. (new) A turbine according to claim 1, further comprising a bearing, wherein the step is axially positioned between the bearing and the at least one stage, and the step projects axially away from the bearing.

21. (new) A rotary shaft according to claim 7, wherein the annular step, including its circumferential surface and its side surface, is an integral portion of the shaft.

22. (new) A turbine according to claim 13 further comprising:  
a bearing axially positioned between the first and second annular steps, each of the first and second annular steps projecting away from the bearing.

23. (new) A turbine according to claim 13, wherein the first annular step is axially positioned between the bearing and a first set of stages for holding the buckets, and the second annular step is axially positioned between the bearing and a second set of stages for holding buckets, wherein the first annular step projects axially toward the first set of stages and the second annular step projects axially toward the second set of stages.